



China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia

By Peter C. Perdue

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From about 1600 to 1800, the Qing empire of China expanded to unprecedented size. Through astute diplomacy, economic investment, and a series of ambitious military campaigns into the heart of Central Eurasia, the Manchu rulers defeated the Zunghar Mongols, and brought all of modern Xinjiang and Mongolia under their control, while gaining dominant influence in Tibet. The China we know is a product of these vast conquests.

Peter C. Perdue chronicles this little-known story of China's expansion into the northwestern frontier. Unlike previous Chinese dynasties, the Qing achieved lasting domination over the eastern half of the Eurasian continent. Rulers used forcible repression when faced with resistance, but also aimed to win over subject peoples by peaceful means. They invested heavily in the economic and administrative development of the frontier, promoted trade networks, and adapted ceremonies to the distinct regional cultures.

Perdue thus illuminates how China came to rule Central Eurasia and how it justifies that control, what holds the Chinese nation together, and how its relations with the Islamic world and Mongolia developed. He offers valuable comparisons to other colonial empires and discusses the legacy left by China's frontier expansion. The Beijing government today faces unrest on its frontiers from peoples who reject its autocratic rule. At the same time, China has launched an ambitious development program in its interior that in many ways echoes the old Qing policies.

China Marches West is a tour de force that will fundamentally alter the way we understand Central Eurasia.

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Editorial Review

Review

This is a masterpiece of contemporary scholarship. Nothing like it has been published in the field of Asian studies for several decades. And no one has written about Inner Asia during the formative eighteenth century with such comprehensive vision. It covers a huge swath of place and time, has impressive intellectual reach, and speaks with a calm certainty that sustains the reader's attention for the length of the book. (Timothy Brook, author of *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China*)

A masterful examination of imperial expansion and frontier history, this work goes to the roots of what it meant, for China, to be an 'empire' in the eighteenth century. Perdue's massive and detailed research into the expansion of the Qing empire contributes a crucial dimension to the comparative study of the Chinese, Russian, and Ottoman empires in the early modern period. This is a first-rate accomplishment and a truly outstanding piece of scholarship. (Nicola Di Cosmo, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton)

Building on meticulous research in several languages, Perdue argues convincingly that the Qing conquests were of enormous importance both locally and globally. Drawing us deep into interconnected issues of frontier environments, state formation, and control of the historical record before the age of mass communication, his nuanced account sets a new standard for the study of both comparative empires and identity formation in the early modern world. (Joanna Waley-Cohen, author of *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History*)

In this major work, Perdue challenges historians' focus on China's struggles with European powers and argues that the more important historical event was the Manchu Qing empire's fight with the Zunghar Mongolian state and the Muscovite Russian empire for domination of Central Asia. He traces the rise of the Qing and how they--with military conquest and repression, but also through trade policies, economic development, and administrative effectiveness--established a claim on Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia that holds to this day...Perdue succeeds in giving new life to matters that have succumbed to stale conventional thinking. (Lucian Pye *Foreign Affairs* 2005-05-01)

In this massive and beautifully illustrated volume, Peter C. Perdue has produced the first broad survey in a Western language in virtually a century of the Qing dynasty's protracted wars against the Zunghars...Numerous maps and lavish illustrations, many in color, from new and historic photographs, paintings, and woodcuts contribute to the immediate appeal of this weighty tome. As an account of how China defeated the Zunghars and how the Qing dynasty secured its conquest of the eastern part of Central Eurasia, this ground-breaking book will be read by both specialists evaluating the arguments and by students needing an introduction to this important topic. (Christopher P. Atwood *American Historical Review*)

A masterful work on Central Eurasian political and cultural dynamics, Perdue's book is also a virtual education in critical thinking and a model of good corrective historical writing. *China Marches West* competently unravels the complexity of the dynamics of Central Eurasia up to the latter part of the eighteenth century with the successful formation of the Qing empire. (Franklin J. Woo *China Review International*)

This is a sumptuous book, beautifully written, beautifully illustrated and beautifully produced. It is a joy to hold and to read. The subject is dramatic, the conquest of Central Eurasia by the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty, from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. It tells a story, in alternating sections of narrative and

analysis, that is both historical and modern. The extension of Qing power continues to have huge implications for China and for the geopolitics of North and Central Asia. The book is based on impeccable scholarship; the author has used such a rich range of sources, in seven languages, that the work must be described as definitive. (Diana Lary *Pacific Affairs*)

In this acclaimed book, Peter Perdue presents a study of more than 100 years of the frontier relations, military campaigns, logistics, and diplomatic maneuvers that resulted in the Qing conquest of Central Eurasia. Taking his cue from the Qianlong emperor, he positions the Qing at the centre of his narrative, yet he is at pains to show that this is the story of not one, but three great empires: Ming, Russian, and Mongol, which contended for power in the heart of Eurasia in the 17th to 18th century. And herein lies his thesis. While never losing sight of the unpredictability of conquest, Perdue uses the model of competitive state-building to explain why it was not until the 18th century that a dynasty ruling from Beijing conclusively eradicated the nomadic enemy to its north. Picking his way deftly through national historiographies and an impressive array of primary sources, Perdue recounts the familiar story of how, by the late 16th century, the Russian state was gradually expanding, not only westwards but deep into Siberia...This is a weighty book in every sense, and along the way Perdue pointedly engages with many of the major theoretical perspectives and trends in recent scholarship on modern Chinese history: ethnic and national identities, frontier management, China's place in world history, and the interaction of nomad and steppe empires. They are all here--the issues and debated that have been quietly transforming the face of Qing studies over the past ten to 15 years but which, for the most part, have still to filter into mainstream writings and comparative studies. For this reason, if none other, this book should be read not only by China specialists, but all those with an interest in bringing Chinese history in from the cold. (L.J. Newby *Times Higher Education Supplement* 2006-12-01)

China Marches West is a masterful study of the dissolution of the last nomadic empire, Zunghar, and the partition of Central Eurasia in the 17th and 18th centuries by the two superpowers, China and Russia...We have been badly in need of studies that can provide us with an appropriate understanding of the importance of Central Eurasia, especially in relation to the emergence of the two continental empires of Russia and China in the context of world history. Perdue's book not only fills this gap but also drastically raises the level of our understanding of the subject. A specialist in Chinese history, concentrating on the Ming-Qing period, Perdue boldly turns his eye to the Mongolian steppe and beyond...This book is full of details, but the descriptions are not monotonous: vivid narration, keen remarks, and interpretive discussions render this thick volume fascinating and readable. The details are firmly based on primary sources in the many different languages of Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and Russian. Perdue's scope of interest is amazingly broad, covering virtually the whole Eurasian continent, and his command of literatures in European history and social sciences is also astounding. It is no wonder that readers feel no awkwardness in his comparative historical discourse and are convinced of his conclusion that the formation of the Qing state was not much different from that of European states. Perdue's book should be recommended to all the students sitting in the classes of Asian as well as European history, and to all scholars of these regions besides. A large number of maps, pictures, and diagrams help readers in following the arguments without much difficulty. In sum, there is no doubt that this book is a brilliant achievement of modern American historical scholarship and will remain a serious challenge to future scholars in the discipline of historical analysis. (Kim Hodong *Sino-Platonic Papers* 2006-11-01)

The text is elegantly constructed, the argument is thoughtful and the illustrations are well chosen and beautifully presented. (Michael Dillon *Asian Affairs* 2006-11-01)

The book has been arranged as meticulously as the military logistics the author finds so critical to Chinese imperial consolidation in Central Eurasia. It is, as Perdue is well aware from his command of a vast range of

material, the most comprehensive narrative account in English, as well as many other languages. Certainly no other work in any language engages so extensively with so many issues current in both Chinese and world history...Perdue has opened a new frontier that may never be entirely settled, but that certainly provides ample space for years of exploration. (David A. Bellow *Chinese Historical Review* 2005-09-01)

About the Author

Peter C. Perdue is Professor of History at Yale University.

Users Review

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The book with title China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia has lot of information that you can study it. You can get a lot of profit after read this book. This particular book exist new know-how the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world today. That is important to you to know how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you with new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book on the smart phone, so you can read the idea anywhere you want.

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